

Appl. No. 10/805,970
Amdt. Dated October 12, 2005
Reply to Office Action of September 23, 2005

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the PTO action mailed September 23, 2005. Applicant has amended claims 1 and 17. In view of the amendments and remarks, Applicant believes that the application is in condition for allowance.

In the PTO action, claims 1-2, 5, 6, 15, 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) or in the alternative under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Eschweiler, Jr. et al., patent no. 5,242,369 ("Eschweiler").

Applicant's invention provides a folding machine that is quickly and easily disassembled for repair or maintenance, while providing for lightweight parts for removal. None of the cited prior art provides all of these advantages. For example, Applicant's invention provides for a work area that processes paper sheets that is formed in-between a first removable plate and a first fold plate. The first fold plate remains in the housing when the first removable plate is removed. Thus, about half the weight of the plates remain in the housing, so that it is easier and quicker for an attendant to perform maintenance on the machine. This ease of disassembly is not possible with the prior art apparatus.

For example, Eschweiler's apparatus depicts in Fig. 7 a pair of inverting chutes 14 that are attached to each other and form a single unit that is removed from the housing as a unit. Removal of both of Eschweiler's inverting chutes 14 is twice as heavy as compared to Applicant's invention — that only requires one side of the plates to be removed. Eschweiler fails to teach or suggest a first removable fold plate attached and substantially parallel to a first fold plate and forming a first work area between the first removable plate and the first fold plate.

The PTO action identified item 54 in Eschweiler as the first and second fold plate. Eschweiler, however, describes item 54 as a "side frame." Further, the PTO action identified

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Eschweiler removable plate as item 12 and 14. Eschweiler, however, describes items 12 and 14 as "chutes." Namely, buckle chute 12 and inverting chute 14. As depicted and described in Eschweiler, the side frame 54 forms an overall housing on the external side of the apparatus and the chutes 12 and 14 are mounted therein. As shown in Fig. 2, the chutes 12 and 14 are oriented perpendicular to the side frame 54. The chutes 12 and 14 receive the sheets of paper and process the paper by "buckling" for the buckle chute 12 and "inverting" in the inverting chute 14. It is clear from the disclosure of Eschweiler that the side frame 54 is not oriented parallel to either chute 12 or 14. Also Eschweiler does not teach or suggest a work area formed between the side frame 54 nor chute 12 or 14, as mentioned in the PTO Action mailed September 23.

Eschweiler depicts a work area provided between each individual pair of buckle chutes 12 and each individual pair of inverting chutes 14. Therefore, even if the chutes 12 and 14 were removable with respect to the side frame 54, they do not form a work area between the side frame 54 and each chute 12 and 14. Nor are the chutes parallel to the side frame 54. As shown in Figs. 1 and 7 of Eschweiler, the chutes 12 and 14 are oriented perpendicular to the side frame 54 and there is no work area formed in-between the chutes and the side frame 54.

Amended claim 1 requires a processing area including a first removable plate attached and substantially parallel to the first fold plate and forming a first work area between the first removable plate and the first fold plate. Claim 1 also requires a second removable plate attached and substantially parallel to the second fold plate and forming a second work area between the first removable plate and the first fold plate. Eschweiler fails to teach or suggest each of these elements. Eschweiler does not teach or suggest a first work area formed between a first removable plate and a parallel first fold plate. As well, Eschweiler does not teach or suggest a second work area formed between a second removable plate and a parallel second fold plate.

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Claim 17 requires an upper plate removably mounted and substantially parallel to the lower fold plate. Claim 17 also requires a work area formed between the removable plate and a parallel lower fold plate. As discussed above for claim 1, Eschweiler fails to teach or suggest a removable plate oriented parallel to a fold plate with a work area formed therebetween. Therefore, Eschweiler fails to teach or suggest each of the elements of independent claims 1 and 17. Claims 2-16 and 18-22 depend from claims 1 and 17, and include the limitations thereof, respectively and are also allowable over Eschweiler.

Claims 24-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eschweiler. Claims 24 and 25 depend from claim 17 and include all the limitations thereof. As discussed, above Eschweiler fails to teach or suggest all of the limitations of claim 1 and therefore dependent claims 24 and 25 are also allowable over Eschweiler.

Claims 7-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eschweiler in view of Bluthardt et al. Claims 7-14 depend from claim 1 and include all of the limitations thereof. As discussed above, Eschweiler fails to teach or suggest all of the limitations of claim 1. Likewise Bluthardt also fails to teach or suggest each of the limitations of claim 1. For example, Bluthardt fails to disclose a processing area including a first removable plate attached and substantially parallel to the first fold plate and forming a first work area therebetween and a second removable plate attached and substantially parallel to the second fold plate and forming a second work area therebetween. Therefore, neither Eschweiler nor Bluthardt, alone or in combination, teach or suggest each of the elements of claim 1. Therefore, because each of claims 7-14 include the limitations of claim 1 they are allowable over Eschweiler in view of Bluthardt.

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Therefore, in view of the above amendments and remarks, claims 1-25 are in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests that the application be moved to issuance.

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